False Alarm Program

May 21, 2014

History

- Overly regulatory approach
- Accidental trips
  - Should they be counted?
- MCSO response to false alarms

False Alarm Data

- MCSO Calls for Service (CFS) capture data under several alarm categories including:
    - False Burglar Alarm
    - Audible Burglar Alarm
    - Silent Burglar Alarm
    - Panic Alarm
    - False Panic Alarm
    - Silent Panic Alarm

False Alarm Data

- In 2012, MCSO responded to 897 False Alarms.

- 99.23% were classified as false.

- 7 were actual incidents.

- The statistics do not distinguish between residential and commercial properties.

- False Alarms are routinely in the top 5 CFS annually.

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False Alarm Program Options

- **Option #1: No Change**
  - MCSO continues to respond to false alarms like any other call for service.
  - Resources utilized for deputy safety.
    - Type of false alarm
    - Incident situation that deputy encounters

False Alarm Program Options

- **Option #2: Service Fee Recovery Approach**
  - Does not require prior registration (no permit).
  - Program focus is on alarm owners after a violation occurs.
    - Contact information recorded after violation
    - Violations reset to zero every 365 days
  - Allow for a fixed number of false alarms prior to a service fee assessment.
    - Apache Junction allows 4
    - Other surrounding jurisdictions allow 1 or 2

False Alarm Program Options

- **Service Fee Recovery Collection**
  - Utility Billing
    - False alarm fee treated similar to water/sewer/trash fees
    - False alarm fee added to monthly utility billing
  - Separate Invoice
    - Alarm owner sent invoice generated by tracking software
    - Collections service utilized after 120-days of non-payment
      - Typically split on a 50-50 basis
      - City of Tempe has met with success utilizing this method

False Alarm Program Options

- **Option #3: Misdemeanor Penalty**
  - Similar to Option #2
    - No permit required
    - Alarm owner only known once a violation occurs
    - Fixed number of allowed violations
    - Service fee imposed after allowed violations exceeded
  - Penalties for violating the false alarm ordinance
    - First offense = Petty offense
    - Second offense = Class 2 misdemeanor
    - Third offense = Class 1 misdemeanor

False Alarm Program Options

- Option #4: Community Education Initiative
  - 6-12 month review of false alarm types
  - 6-12 month community education program
    - Tri-fold brochures left at false alarm locations
    - Social media campaign
    - Town website page developed
    - Water bill inserts
  - Cost to support effort: $2,600-$2,950

Tracking Software

- **Digital Designs Group**
  - False Alarm Data Management System
    - Alarm violation location information viewable from a single page
    - Can generate informational, warning and service fee letters
  - Utilized by Apache Junction PD

Timeline

- June 2014
  - Draft ordinance based on Council option
  - Software procurement
- July 2014
  - Town Council possible ordinance adoption
  - Outreach to citizens and business community
- August-September 2014
  - Meet with alarm providers to obtain assistance with outreach efforts
  - Develop program forms
- January 2014
  - Ordinance becomes effective